

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHKB #0079 0351305
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 041305Z FEB 10
FM AMEMBASSY BAKU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2359
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAKU 000079

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/05/2030
TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [OSCE](#) [RU](#) [IR](#) [AJ](#)
SUBJECT: AZERBAIJAN GOVERNMENT COMMENTS ON MOBILIZING
PRESSURE TO PERSUADE IRAN'S ENGAGEMENT ON ITS NUCLEAR
PROGRAM

REF: STATE 09124

Classified By: Charge D'Affaires Don Lu, Reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) Baku Iran Affairs Officer vigorously delivered reftel talking points on February 2 to Elchin Huseynli, MFA point man on the Iranian nuclear program. Huseynli, reports directly to GOAJ Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov, and was accompanied by his deputy, Aykan Hajizada.

¶2. (C) Huseynli took in all points and displayed a good grasp of the issue as well as the historical and technical background. He did not dispute any reftel characterizations of Iranian behavior, which he acknowledged is a legitimate cause for concern. Nonetheless Huseynli stressed that Azerbaijan is not ready to take any public action supporting sanctions against Iran, and is unlikely to do much unofficially either. He repeated the standard GOAJ position that Azerbaijan is a small country in a tough neighborhood, that as a matter of national interest is highly reluctant to confront either Iran or Russia publicly, except on matters of state independence and sovereignty.

¶3. (C) In this context, he said that Azerbaijan is not prepared to openly support additional sanctions against Iran in the United Nations, or vote for resolutions in other bodies that explicitly "singles out" Iran for harsh criticism over their nuclear activities. Depending on the context, he said that Azerbaijan IS willing to support resolutions indirectly concerning Iran in international bodies, including those that call on all signatories to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, or express strong opposition to pursuit of nuclear weapons programs in the region.

¶4. (C) As an illustration, he said that the GOAJ was prepared to vote for a generally-worded, Ukrainian-drafted resolution during the 2009 OSCE plenary, but could not vote for the more explicit amended resolution criticizing Iran and North Korea that was successfully submitted by the USG and some other member states. (Note: Until recently, Huseynli was a member of the Azerbaijani mission to OSCE in Vienna. End Note). He also said that the GOAJ does not feel comfortable pressing Iran even informally and unofficially on these issues. (Note: Several GOAJ Ministers are allegedly commercial partners with Iranian regime-connected figures in several major business projects in Azerbaijan and elsewhere. End Note).

¶5. (C) Speaking personally, Huseynli questioned the breadth of support from other P5 1 states for a significantly stronger Iran sanctions regime. He specifically expressed skepticism that Russia is "willing to move beyond words" in supporting new sanctions goals. He also asserted that existing Iran sanctions have had no positive impact on Iranian behavior, and opined that any new sanctions would only "hurt the Iranian people." He did not, however, offer any alternative suggestions for promoting a solution to the nuclear issue.

